



JACK DOYLE

MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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County To Reform Delivery of Social Services

*Changes To Lower The Cost Of Programs To County Taxpayers
While Improving Service For Clients*

Monroe County Executive **Jack Doyle** today announced that the delivery of social service programs in Monroe County will be transformed to provide better customer service while saving taxpayers up to \$30 million in 2003. As part of the effort, the traditional Departments of Social Services, Mental Health, Aging and the Youth Bureau, along with certain Health Department functions will be merged into a new Department of Human & Health Services. The remaining health department functions will be included in a new Department of Public Health. The consolidations build upon ongoing efforts by the Department of Social Services to increase efficiency and reduce costs.

"The old structure of these departments based on government funding streams demands change," said Doyle. "We need to be focused on meeting the needs of clients receiving assistance and helping them become independent. By creating the Department of Human & Health Services, we will meet this goal and greatly reduce the costs of these programs to County taxpayers."

The five departments to be merged currently serve many of the same clients creating numerous redundancies and wasting tax dollars. Many clients are served by multiple caseworkers from different departments causing them confusion and forcing them to navigate a bureaucratic maze. The new system, when completed, will create a one-stop process to apply for benefits and improve case management. The simplified process will also improve the County's ability to discover fraud.

"Under the current system, there is a separate paper form for nearly every program and the average file for a client is two to four inches thick. Just between two divisions within the current Department of Social Services over 40,000 transactions take place generating 600,000 sheets of paper," said Doyle. "Ultimately, through this initiative will we use technology to eliminate these reams of paperwork and bring sanity to the application process. We must and will bring the delivery of social services into the 21st century and we'll save taxpayers millions in the process."

The idea for the creation of the new Department of Human & Health Services was based on the preliminary findings of a study conducted by Monroe County in conjunction with Altrey Consulting. In addition, Deputy County Executive Dick Mackey has been appointed by Doyle to head up the process of creating the new department. The County will form teams comprised of employees at all levels within the existing departments to help craft and implement the changes.

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Doyle expects the process to begin immediately and the new Department of Human & Health Services to begin operations during January 2003.

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